

Loyola
College
Montreal Canada

REPORT OF MEETINGS OF THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

Between June 28 and July 18, 1960, nine meetings were held. Very Rev. Fr. Rector attended the first two, Frs. Moylan and MacPhee attended the first five, Fr. Bernard Lonergan attended one (fifth), and Frs. Asselin, Hoffmann and Stanford were present at all nine.

The FIRST meeting attempted to settle the content of the course of Theology, but it soon became apparent that there should first be an explicit Department view of the purpose of the course. Is it intellectual, or moral, or a combination of the two?

At the SECOND meeting it was unanimously proclaimed that the IMMEDIATE AND SPECIFYING PURPOSE OF OUR THEOLOGY COURSE IS INTELLECTUAL, TO COMMUNICATE KNOWLEDGE. It was also agreed that we cannot teach the totality of theological knowledge, and that our course should have a formality which is Christocentric.

The THIRD meeting was devoted to the content of the course. There was discussion of a three-year course of three lectures per week for a total of three credits. Fr. MacPhee offered the following:

1st year: Religion, Christian Religion, Comparative Religion, especially Buddhism and Mohammedanism. The Church: Institution, Constitution and History. 2nd year: God: existence, operations, attributes; Trinity, Eschatology. Incarnation and Redemption.

3rd year: Grace and the Sacraments; the Sacramentals.

On this, Fr. Asselin had the following observations: There is nothing

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about Scripture in the course, to obviate the danger of fundamentalism in our students; a course is needed on the laymen's position in the Church, as the Popes have urged; there is no mention of a remedial course for those who have had no Catholic theology; there is no central point connecting the whole course.

Fr. MacPhee admitted that his was a straight dogmatic course.

Fr. Hoffmann suggested that our matter could be resumed under the following headings: 1) Some knowledge of fundamental theology: the sources and methods of Theology; an introduction to Scripture, the notion of genus litterarum, development of dogma, the rights of the Church as a teaching authority. 2) Notion of the supernatural life: as lost, as restored by Christ, as given and increased through Christ and the Church (De Gratia, De Verbo, De Redemptore, De Ecclesia). 3) Growth of supernatural life - God's part: Mass, Sacraments, and moving towards De Novissimis. 4) Our response: some treatment of moral theology in a wide and positive sense; and understanding of the meaning of obligation as a response of love; the Virtues; some understanding of the Church's right to make laws; Asceticism; Social consciousness in morality and in worship.

At the FOURTH meeting, the following points were discussed:

- 1) Should students be required to attend a certain percentage of lectures?
- 2) Should individual Seniors who receive less than 45 have their mark raised to 50 (or more)?
- 3) Should the final exam in Senior be held in January, with a supplemental possible in May?

To question 1), the unanimous opinion of the committee was YES.

Regardless of reasons (except in a really extraordinary case),

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students should be required to attend a certain percentage of lectures.

Fr. Asselin: Freshman & Soph.: 80%; Junior & Senior: 75%

Fr. MacPhee: Same opinion as Fr. Asselin

Fr. Moylan: All four years: 75%

Fr. Hoffmann: All four years: 80%

Fr. Stanford: All four years: 75%

The committee was unanimous in stating that if this minimum is not attended, the student should repeat the course.

In reply to question 2), four out of five members of the committee said that the mark should not be raised. Fr. Moylan alone thought that it might be raised if that were the only failure; if there were another failure, the mark should not be raised.

In reply to question 3), the unanimous answer was NO. The reason given was that Theology is an academic subject just like Physics or Philosophy, and should not be treated any differently.

At the FIFTH meeting Fr. Bernard Lonergan was present. There was no fixed agenda, and the purpose was to get Fr. Lonergan's views on the teaching of Theology. He held that it is a mistake to give Apologetics, that the big difficulty with former systems is the lack of treatment of historical development, and that the textbooks for Theology as it should be taught do not exist. The problem has not been solved on the seminary level yet, and we have to break ground.

At the SIXTH meeting the committee reverted to the question of content.

Fr. Hoffmann thought that we should start with a survey course, so that

the whole matter can be seen as a unit. From a practical point of view it would be good to have Sacraments early, but logically it should come after Ecclesiology. At any rate, the central point of the course should be LIFE AS COMING FROM CHRIST. Fr. Asselin thought that Howell's book should come in first year, as a survey course needs something Liturgical. The question of what should go in first year took up most of the time of this meeting. Frs. Hoffmann and Stanford felt that the inclusion of Howell's book in first year would leave the students in Junior with the impression that they had had the matter before. The feeling of students that "We've had this before" is one of the problems teachers of Theology have to face, and points up the advantage of having many professors, so that specialized courses can be given where that complaint cannot be voiced.

At the SEVENTH meeting Fr. Hoffmann offered a general plan for the four years. 1st year: Expand some chapters of Map of Life; explain theological method, the relation between Faith and Theology, between Theology and Philosophy; give a treatment of Kelly's Modern Youth and Chastity; say something on Vocation, Mass, the Eucharist.

2nd year: Concrete economy of salvation, the totus Christus. Grace and the supernatural life; actual grace, prayer, original sin, problems of Genesis and development of doctrine, Incarnation, Redemption, special stress on the identity of Christ and the Church; the Church as a living organism, various vocations in the Church.

3rd year: Sacraments and the Mass, from the historical point of view.

4th year: Positive Moral Theology, Virtues, Christian Living.

Fr. Asselin asked how we would introduce students to theological method.

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He felt that any formal treatment of sources is too dry. He was against any 'ad hoc' treatment of useful topics. Map of Life, he said needs to be supplemented; it mixes Philosophy and Theology and is inadequate. It doesn't give a fresh approach to Dogma, and reinforces certain previous conceptions. How are we to expand the Mass and Sacraments without using Howell?

The EIGHTH and NINTH meetings were largely given to a continuation of the discussion of the content and division of the course, and the attached plan is the result. It was realized that this is not final. If this plan is adopted, it can be applied in first and second year now, in third year in 1961, and in fourth year in 1962. Until then, Junior and Senior would remain as they were last year.

In regard to the burden of correcting exams and quizzes, Fr. Asselin pointed out that Theology is in a special position. It is a subject which all the students take, and there is only one professor for all the students in each year. In Freshman, for example, there might be this year around 400 students, and although the situation is not that bad in the upper classes, the problem of correction is still a very real one. Consequently, it was proposed that specially chosen students be allowed to be used in the correction of quizzes and exams. It was agreed to submit this as one of the recommendations.

Finally, since we are feeling our way in Theology, it was agreed to have meetings during the year to collate information and report on progress in arriving at a final and detailed plan.